

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 MAZATL 00543 271827Z
ACTION SCA-01

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 SCSE-00 SSO-00 L-03 H-02 DHA-02
PPTE-00 /019 W
-----271830Z 002282 /43

O 271530Z DEC 76 ZFF4
FM AMCONSUL MAZATLAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 1014
INFO AMEMBASSY MEXICO NIACT IMMEDIATE
AMCONGEN MONTERREY PRIORITY

UNCLAS MAZATLAN 0543

STATE ATTENTION SCA

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CASC, MEX, CDES
SUBJ: HIGHWAY MURDER OF U.S. CITIZENS, JOHN O. GHARST AND DAUGHTER,
LORALEE BROWN

REF: MAZATLAN'S 0538 AND 0542

1. ON DECEMBER 25 AT 9:30 P.M. DURANGO POLICEMAN AND FORMER BODY GUARD OF CONSUL MATTHEWS CALLED AT RESIDENCE TO INFORM HER THAT NEAR PALMITOS, SINALOA, ENROUTE FROM DURANGO TO MAZATLAN. HE HAD SEEN AN ILLINOIS VEHICLE WITH TWO DEAD AMERICANS IN IT, SLUMPED FORWARD ON THE DASH. HE SAID ONE DOOR OF THE VEHICLE WAS OPEN AND THAT THE LIGHTS WERE ON. HE HAD BEEN INFORMED AT A LOCAL GAS STATION THAT THE TWO VICTIMS HAD BEEN SHOT AT ABOUT 4 P.M. BY A LONE GUNMAN. AS MAZATLAN POLICE HAVE JURISDICTION THIS AREA, HE REPORTED INCIDENT TO THEM FROM RESIDENCE. CONSUL SUBSEQUENTLY CONTACTED POLICE AND WAS INFORMED THAT THEY WERE IMMEDIATELY PROCEEDING TO PALMITOS TO TAKE CHARGE OF SITUATION.

2. EARLY MORNING OF DECEMBER 26 BODIES WERE SENT MAZATLAN FUNERAL HOME. CORONER ESTABLISHED CAUSE OF DEATH AS BULLET WOUNDS IN HEADS OF BOTH PARTIES WHO WERE SHOT AT CLOSE RANGE
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 MAZATL 00543 271827Z

WITH 45 CALIBER AUTOMATIC PISTOL.

3. CONSUL PROCEEDED TO DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE IN CONCORDIA WHERE PERSONAL POSSESSIONS WERE RECOVERED, AUTOMOBILE IS IN CUSTODY OF MAZATLAN FEDERAL HIGHWAY POLICE. IDENTITY OF VICTIMS ESTABLISHED AS FOLLOWS: JOHN O. GHARST, D.O.B. MAY 9, 1907,

RR#1, EDGEWOOD, ILLINOIS AND HIS DAUGHTER LORALEE BROWN, 217 TYLER DR., ARCOLA, ILLINOIS. UNTIL COMMUNICATION WITH NOK ESTABLISHED, IDENTITY OF WOMAN PASSENGER WAS UNKNOWN, HER PURSE WITH IDENTIFYING DOCUMENTS NOT AMONG BELONGINGS TURNED OVER TO CONSUL.

4. NOK, SON, JOHN G. GHARST, TELEPHONE (309) 264 8534, MORTON ILLINOIS, HAS BEEN CONTACTED AND ARRANGEMENTS MADE FOR RETURN OF REMAINS OF VICTIMS TO LOUISVILLE, ILLINOIS FOR BURIAL.

5. POLICE THEORIZE THAT GHARST AND DAUGHTER WERE SHOT BY HITCHHIKER WHOM THEY REFUSED TO GIVE RIDE. POLICE STATE THAT THICK FOG IN THE MOUNTAINS PROBABLY CAUSED GHARST TO TRAVEL AT VERY LOW SPEED AND AFFORDED HITCHHIKER OPPORTUNITY TO SHOOT THEM.

6. HIGHWAY FROM DURANGO TO MAZATLAN IS 180 MILES, TWO-LANE MOUNTAIN ROAD WITH MANY DANGEROUS CURVES, IN POOR CONDITION, AND USED AS ENTRY TO MAZATLAN FROM POINTS EAST OF NOGALES, IE, MATAMOROS, LAREDO, MCALLEN, EAGLE PASS, ETC. THESE CONDITIONS PROVIDE IDEAL SET-UP FOR ROAD BLOCKS AND PREVENT EVASIVE DRIVING GETAWAYS, WHEN QUESTIONED AS TO NUMBER OF INCIDENTS OCCURRING ON THIS ROAD, CONCORDIA DISTRICT ATTORNEY STATED THERE HAD BEEN SEVERAL AND THAT HE WOULD ADVISE TOURISTS NOT TO TRAVEL THIS ROAD AFTER THREE P.M. HE ADDED THAT THERE ARE NO VIGILANTE PATROLS COVERING THIS AREA.
MATTHEWS

UNCLASSIFIED

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976MAZATL00543
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760473-0112
From: MAZATLAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761213/aaaaakto.tel
Line Count: 87
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SCA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 MAZATLAN 538
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 DEC 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: WITHDRAWN <10 JUN 2004 by chengls, PRIVACY>; APPROVED <21 DEC 2004 by vogelfj>; RELEASED <21 DEC 2004 by vogelfj>; APPROVED <22 DEC 2004 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HIGHWAY MURDER OF U.S. CITIZENS, JOHN O. GHARST AND DAUGHTER, LORALEE BROWN
TAGS: CASC, CDES, MX, (GHARST, JOHN O), (BROWN, LORALEE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006